

Abstract

Considered the most unsuccessful show in the Hayward Gallery's history, the Artist Placement Group's exhibition *inn70: Art and Economics* (1971-72, London) was advertised as an "exhibition in time." The exhibition was an opportunity for the Artist Placement Group (APG) to document their progress in negotiating artist placements within industrial corporations, such as British Steel, Esso Petroleum, and ICI Fibres. The exhibition co-opted corporate language and ritual, creating a replica of a typical boardroom where meetings between artists and members of industry took place, live, throughout the entirety of the exhibition. This paper re-considers the *inn70* exhibition within the context of a shifting British economy and subsequently a re-defining of Britain's intellectual left. This paper will argue APG's radicalism should not be defined by democratic participation, but instead, in terms of how language within an exhibition can be used to redefine discourse, blurring and subverting the boundaries between art and economics. ●

Resumo

Considerada o maior fracasso na história da Galeria Hayward, a exposição *inn70: Art and Economics* (1971-72, Londres), organizada pelo Artist Placement Group (APG), foi promovida como uma "exposição no seu tempo". Este evento constituiu uma oportunidade para o APG documentar o seu progresso nas negociações para a colocação de artistas em corporações industriais, como a British Steel, a Esso Petroleum e a ICI Fibres. A exposição apropriou-se da linguagem e processos corporativos, apresentando uma réplica de uma sala de reunião empresarial, onde decorriam ao vivo encontros entre artistas e membros da indústria. Este artigo reanalisa a exposição *inn70: Art and Economics*, tendo em consideração o contexto da época, marcado por uma economia britânica em mutação e, consequentemente, pela redefinição da esquerda intelectual do país. Este artigo argumenta que o radicalismo do APG não deve ser definido como participação democrática, mas sim pelo modo como a linguagem de uma exposição pode ser usada para redefinir narrativas, esbatendo e subvertendo as fronteiras entre arte e economia. ●

Peer Review

Sandra Jürgens

Instituto de História da Arte, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas,
Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal

Carlos Garrido Castellano

Department of Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies, University
College Cork, Ireland

keywords

LANGUAGE
CONCEPTUAL SCULPTURE
CORPORATION
1970S

palavras-chave

LINGUAGEM
ESCULTURA CONCEPTUAL
CORPORAÇÃO
DÉCADA DE 1970

Date of Submission

Nov. 2018

Date of Approval

Mar. 2019

MORE FOR LESS

ART, LANGUAGE AND THE CORPORATION IN THE *INN70:ART AND ECONOMICS* EXHIBITION (1971-72) AT THE HAYWARD GALLERY, LONDON

KATHERINE JACKSON

Art History PhD Candidate,
University of British Columbia
katherine.jackson@alumni.ubc.ca

“More for less’ an appropriation of disputed territory
known to exist between art and economics.”

(Artist Placement Group, *inn70: Art and Economics* exhibition catalogue, 1971)

Dismissed by critics as naïve and subsumed by ideology, the Artist Placement Group’s exhibition, *inn70: Art and Economics* (1971-72), was considered one of the most unsuccessful shows in the history of London’s Hayward Gallery.¹ Advertised as an “exhibition in time”, *inn70* was an opportunity for the Artist Placement Group (APG) to document the progress of their ambitious project, to negotiate placements for artists within industrial corporations.² However, at the exact historical moment the APG chose to place artists within industry; the industrial landscape of Britain was significantly changing. The “stop-go” policy of wage controls by the Labour government defined the socio-political context of the late 1960s/1970s as a period of extreme division and skepticism in the political party system; specifically, the relationship between government and industry. The news media subsequently became a site of political blame. Leftist publications, like the *New Left Review*, claimed that politicians and their policy’s use of language had failed to create compromise. Within this context it is significant that APG’s negotiation of placements and subsequently the exhibition’s text was dependent on the creation of their own language; a glossary of terms that re-crafted industrial corporations’ terms, contracts and graphic design to form hybrids with their own art practice. This paper argues the APG’s creation of their own terminology operated as an artistic strategy to re-define methods

¹ For reviews of *inn70: Art and Economics* see Peter Fuller, “*inn70: The Artist Placement Group*”, *Art Review* 23 (25), December 18, 1971: 772, and Philip Oaks, “Art Clocks In”, *Sunday Times*, November 28, 1971.

² Artist Placement Group. *inn70: Art and Economics*. London: Hayward Gallery Press, 1971.

of negotiation from within the industrial corporate apparatus at a time when the public viewed industry and government's language as inherently flawed. However, in their redefinition of industrial corporate terms and process the APG would ultimately also challenge the industrial and art world's expectations of what constitutes an exhibition.

The Artist Placement Group

The APG was conceptually conceived by Barbara Steveni and established as a charitable trust in 1966 by John Latham, Barbara Steveni, David Hall, Anna Ridley, Jeffrey Shaw and Barry Flanagan.³ Two years later, the APG held a symposium titled, *Industrial Negative*, at the Mermaid Theatre in London inviting artists, members of industry and government. During this symposium, the APG announced their objective: to insert art, "the other," or as their symposium title suggests "the negative," directly into the modes of capitalist production. To do this, APG negotiated what they termed artist placements or "proto-types" within different industrial corporations. Through these placements/"proto-types," the APG sought to juxtapose and critically question what they perceived as artificial divisions within society.⁴ These divisions included perceptions of use versus uselessness in capitalist production, left versus right political affiliations and the organization versus the individual. The APG argued that through the confrontation of these binaries the artwork could create space in the public's imagination for a new vision of the world economy; an economy where these differences co-existed, but where they took part in a more productive totality – in APG's words, to achieve a "Total Economy."⁵

Central to APG's utopic vision was the creation of their own vocabulary. APG's lexicon was composed of practical adaptations made through the process of negotiation with industry and through extensive theoretical discussions held between group members. For example, the negotiated contract with industrial corporations, largely executed by Barbara Steveni, was titled an "Open Brief." The term "Open Brief" refers to the open-ended nature of the placement contract. The contract states, "...the artist is not committed to devising any work of art, product or idea."⁶ The negotiation process and the "Open Brief" contract with each industrial corporation were the foundation of APG's practice. The language of the contract arguably cancelled out or negated the concept of a contract. There was no predetermined outcome, no obligation by the artist. However, while the contract did not specify the form of artistic outcome, it did require the commitment of the corporation and the artist to a future exhibition at the Hayward Gallery in London. The "exhibition clause" reads,

The Company has agreed to pay the full costs (transport, installation, maintenance and insurance) of the exhibition at the Hayward Gallery in November

³ Barbara Steveni, "Barbara Steveni and the Artist Placement Group (APG)". Accessed April 2019, <http://flattimeho.org.uk/apg/>.

⁴ Artist Placement Group. 1968. "Industrial Negative Symposium Questionnaire". TS, Tate Archive, London.

⁵ Artist Placement Group. 1965. "Group Proposal". TS, John Latham Archive, Flat Time House, London.

⁶ Artist Placement Group. 1968. "Sample Contract". TS, Tate Archive, London.

⁷ Ibid.

and December 1971, of an art, work or idea devised by the artist during the period of Association, which it is agreed would contribute to the objectives of that exhibition (agreed by Company, Artist and APG).⁷

The exhibition was later titled *inn70: Art and Economics* and shown from December 1971 to January 1972 at the Hayward Gallery in London.

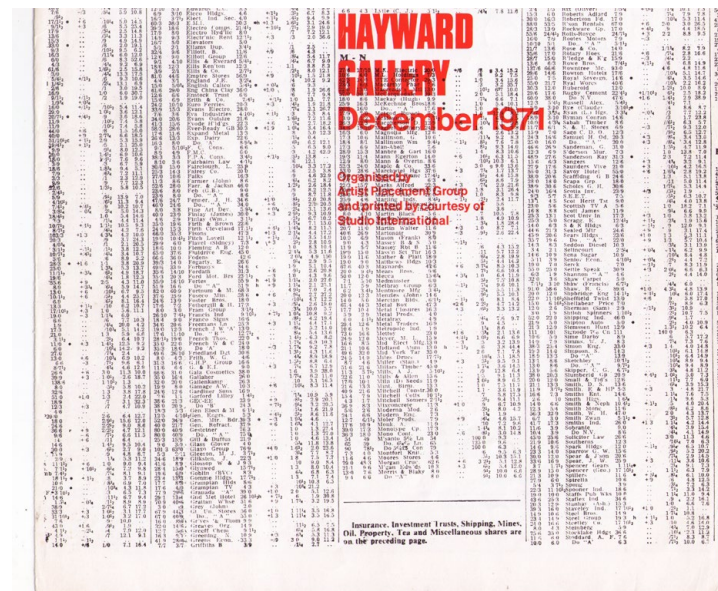
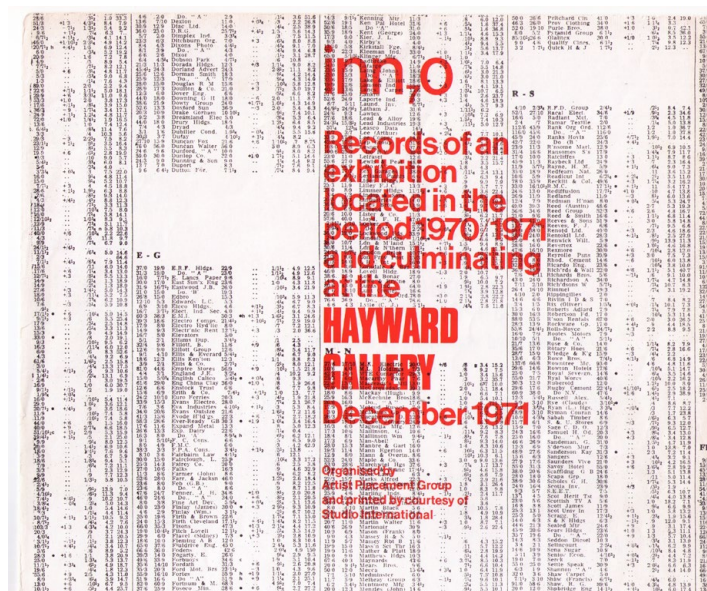
The catalogue

The catalogue for the Artist Placement Group's *inn70: Art and Economics* is an 8 x 10 inches booklet. The cover is composed of narrow columns of numbers in small black print. Like computer data, the numbers scroll down the page. However, occasionally the data is interrupted by blank white rectangles. The gaps in the text are sporadic, like missing puzzle pieces of negative space. The title of the exhibition is printed in large red text and pasted directly on top of the numerical background. It reads, "inn70 Records of an exhibition located in the period 1970-1971 and culminating at the Hayward Gallery" (Figs. 1 and 2).

The inside pages of the booklet mimic the typology and design format of *The Times Financial News*: narrow columns of text with large block headlines and images that line the top of the page. The content of the catalogue is a pastiche, featuring short texts written by the APG and other writers/theorists connected to the Group. The texts are given headlines such as "A national coalition of the iron and steel communities – GE" and "An independent TV Company – DH." The titles refer to the individual placements represented in the exhibition and the initials for the artist

Fig. 1 – Exhibition cover of catalogue for *inn70: Art and Economics* (1971-72) published by the Hayward Gallery Press, London, 1971. Copyright: Barbara Steveni Archive.

Fig. 2 – Additional photograph of Exhibition cover of catalogue for *inn70: Art and Economics* (1971-72) published by the Hayward Gallery Press, London, 1971. Copyright: Barbara Steveni Archive.



who participated, thus GE stands for Garth Evans and DH for David Hall. The short texts describe the progress and/or outcome of each placement.

Throughout the catalogue, the text is interrupted by advertisements and reports. One full page is titled, "United Kingdom Corporation Consolidated Statement of Condition April 1, 1971" (Fig. 3). Printed on the page is a title, date and two columns. In the left column is a list of what APG argue are the total economic losses currently unacknowledged by the U.K. government's policy. These losses include the "cost of misunderstanding between management and work forces in companies," the cost of "boredom and inertia, work force (e.g. absentee strike) withdrawal" and the

ical hauliers offered increases basic pay of up to £2 14s, a but these were rejected. The want extra allowances for rs of larger capacity lorries, y of which transport wool from s to mills.

where complete machines will be assembled. As the skilled labour force builds up at Omagh it will take on the complete machine building process. The Kirkland jersey knitting machines are required in Northern

to on hand-operated machines these days. Modern machines produce nearly all the fabric from man-made fibres as well as the older yarns. * *Hosiery, Knitwear and Lace*, H.M.S.O., 2s.

The licensing agreement with I.C.L. permits the unrestricted use of all 1900-series software. This includes the George operating systems, compilers, utility programmes and standard applications programmes. The Polish manu-

Edinburg
A data link be office of Ran University of puting Service. This follows services agreeer organizations. According t

NORTHER
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to th

The Wool supreme bo industry, mu textile men telling attack posals of I.C ton & Dewht now under se Committee.

The delega been seen as old English gt and discreetly ness and wo arguing in pi

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There has a lost between wool textile i ber of textile machinery is only to find They were let Kearton's let that "the day are over".

In recent y have invaded apparel mar! trousers and synthetic and Yorkshire co buy synthetic they could r fibre produce own subsidi fibres at a p Every York either becom be priced ou fibre produo who already textile "dow —continued firms, people tiles, shortly at Teesside, a man giant, look at the renewed inte

UNITED KINGDOM CORPORATION
Consolidated statement of condition

losses APRIL 1 1971

A INDUSTRIAL

To cost of misunderstanding as between management and work forces in companies	£m
To cost of boredom and inertia, work force (e.g. absentee, strike) withdrawal	. 000
To cost of non-appreciation by management of current attitudes, home	. 000
To cost of ditto, overseas	. 000
To cost of non-availability of information on product conceptions in UK, as compared with big competitors overseas	. 000
To cost of absence of long-term ideological base or value-assessment sophistication	. 000
	<u>0 000</u>

B THE TOTAL ECONOMY

To cost of maintaining redundant premises in EDUCATION (est. 90% of expenditure)	. 000
To deterioration of National assets through lack of care and attention in time—pollution etc.	. 000
To inability to represent UK overseas as a civilised contributor to world	. 000
To errors of judgement by authorities due to adoption of retrospective priority systems and assumptions	. 000
To maintenance of enforcement systems—armed forces, police forces	. 000
	<u>0 000</u>
	<u>0 000</u>

In all these categories the engineer of conceptual material having maximum contact with the public activity in its industrial and decision-making contexts would exert at least a significant influence. The criterion is the degree to which motivation of autonomous statements is independent of predictable financial considerations.

C THE AUTONOMOUS INDIVIDUAL

To cost of maintaining between 50 and 100 individuals capable of carrying autonomous responsibility but accorded professional status	2
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Fig. 3 – Artist Placement Group. "United Kingdom Corporation Consolidated Statement of Condition." In *inn70: Art and Economics*, 23. London: Hayward Gallery Press. Copyright: Barbara Steveni Archive.

⁸ Artist Placement Group. 1971. "United Kingdom Corporation Consolidated Statement of Condition", *inn70: Art and Economics*. London, U.K.: Hayward Gallery Press, 23.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Peter Fuller, "inn70: The Artist Placement Group", *Art Review* 23 (25), December 18, 1971: 772.

¹¹ Antony Hudek. "Staging Dissonance: Artist Placement Group's Performative (Non-) Exhibitions", *Journal of Curatorial Studies* 2 (3), October 2013: 303-328.

cost of "errors of judgment by authorities due to adoption of retrospective priority systems." The immaterial factors APG points to are largely social problems that are usually not prioritized by an industrial budget. The adjacent column lists the amount of pounds lost by each of these factors. The monetary amount for each identified "loss" is consistently zero £ (pounds).⁸

APG's mock "statement of condition" suggests that while the listed economic losses may not be assigned a monetary value or considered important in the short-term, they are nonetheless long-term losses for the U.K.'s economy. APG's critical approach to language is therefore tied to their critique of economic policy. The APG use corporate language and format to ultimately question what is given value and what is not within conventional statements of economic policy.

The Sculpture

inn70: Art and Economics' exhibition space showed documents, sculpture and film from all the placements that were currently in progress. These included Garth Evans and the British Steel Corporation, Stuart Brisley and Hille Furniture Co, Leonard Hessing and ICI Fibres, Andrew Dipper and Esso Petroleum and John Latham's placement with Clare Hall Hospital. The exhibition was considered a "working demonstration." APG, they declared, is concerned with the artist's capacity to be an engineer of conceptual material.

The artist or "engineer's" conceptual material took on varied forms.⁹ Garth Evans transported pieces of steel from the British Steel Corporation onto the gallery floor space and showed a film of him exploring the stockyards. Andrew Dipper presented documentation of his time on the "Bernicia" oil tanker headed from the Indian Ocean to Africa, part of his placement with Esso Petroleum. Other works, such as John Latham's placement with Clare Hall Hospital were more visceral, exhibiting a record of Latham's recovery from a near fatal car accident that occurred months before the exhibition. The work "Hospital" was composed of x-rays that showed Latham's seven broken ribs and lung damage, the remains of the crashed automobile and photographs of nurses and doctors.¹⁰ However, the exhibition's sheer diversity in the hybridist approaches to materials and documentation was held together by the common language of the presentation boards and the catalogue.

In addition to the importance of printed language, the APG also appropriated spoken language and corporate ritual, creating a replica of a boardroom. The "boardroom" featured a large table with chairs, where meetings between artists and members of industry, business, education and the government took place, live, throughout the entirety of the exhibition. The APG considered these meetings an artwork in itself and the rationale for its title, *The Sculpture*.¹¹ However, the meetings were not intended to invite audience participation. In order for the APG and guests to hear one another speak, the space was separated from the rest of the gallery by

transparent plastic. This strategy allowed visitors to observe the live discussions, but not distract from “business.” *The Sculpture* thus took the form of a semi-private perpetual business meeting.¹² The conversations were filmed and projected onto monitors throughout the exhibition space. Participants included industrial representative Peter Baron from ICI Fibres, Derek Dalton the principal of Fine Arts at Newcastle and members of the APG – Barbara Steveni, John Latham, Garth Evans, David Hall and Leonard Hessing. In video recordings of the event, Steveni describes *The Sculpture*, “It was an opportunity for the people we had been approaching to come to us”.¹³ The topics of their discussions included the experience of artists during their placement, the possible benefits of industries taking on artists and industry’s anxiety over what industry and the APG perceived as a growing alienation of the working class (Fig. 4).¹⁴

“I hope you will not mind my going on about this – but as you are who you are...”

inn70: Art and Economics opened to predominantly negative reviews. *Art Review*’s critic Peter Fuller lamented,

The weakness which one constantly faces in his work (John Latham and/or APG) is his naïve belief that class differentiation and the separate motivations of workers and management can be fused into one simply by changing the language.¹⁵

Fuller’s review goes on to argue that the APG’s central paradox was their “mock economics;” their attempt to intervene or change corporate terminology, while at the same time co-operating with, and therefore upholding, the existing corporate management structure. Fuller’s review concludes by stating that despite idealistic intentions, *inn70: Art and Economics* was a futile exercise that resulted in the complicity of art with management culture.¹⁶

In retrospect, Fuller’s review arguably assumes a binary position that dictates two choices: to ethically align oneself with either the working class or management. In regard to language, this translated to the adoption of bureaucratic language or not. The binary framing of these choices ultimately came to define not only APG’s practice, but historic narratives of the broader Conceptual art movement. A movement that like the ideological apparatus of the corporation, the APG had one foot in and one foot out of throughout the entirety of their practice. However, within Fuller’s critique the ambiguity of language itself is arguably overlooked; i.e. the nuances in contract, the exhibition catalogue and the conversation of *The Sculpture*.

In 1970, one year before *inn70: Art and Economics*, art critic Rosetta Brooks considered John Latham’s practice and ultimately APG’s use of language from a more

¹² *The Sculpture* at the Hayward was a recreation of an event held a year earlier during the exhibition *Between 6* at Kunsthalle Dusseldorf in Germany.

¹³ Artist Placement Group. 1972. “The Sculpture”. TS, Film from Barbara Steveni Archive, London.

¹⁴ My description of *The Sculpture* is formed by interviews with Barbara Steveni and her personal film footage from the exhibition. Barbara Steveni Archive, accessed 2017.

¹⁵ Peter Fuller, “*inn70: The Artist Placement Group*”, *Art Review* 23 (25), December 18, 1971: 772.

¹⁶ A critique that is strikingly similar to Fuller’s is a later more general observation made by art historian Benjamin Buchloh in his seminal text, “Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions” (1990). He states, “Conceptual Art came to displace...the mass-produced object and its aestheticized forms in Pop Art, replacing an aesthetic of industrial production and consumption with an aesthetic of administrative and legal organization and institutional validation.” (Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, “Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the critique of Institutions”, *October* 55 [Winter 1990]: 119).



Fig. 4 – *The Sculpture*, 1971, Hayward Gallery, London. Photo Credit: Artist Placement Group. Copyright: Barbara Steveni Archive.

nuanced point of view. Brook states: “By treating forms of painting (or Language as he does in his later work) in such a way as to reveal their inert valueness... Latham’s works are tools but not ordinary tools because they operate through their own self-destruction” (Brooks 1975, 11). In her review, Brooks’ interprets Latham’s and to a large extent APG’s political act as the creation of tools that serve only to deconstruct themselves. In the case of *inn70: Art and Economics*, the APG created their own ‘tools’ through new terminology and new phrases borrowed from the administrative realm of the corporation. However, the APG’s intention was arguably

not to change the system through this new terminology, but rather to draw attention to the negotiation of that language; to examine its ambiguity, loop holes and ultimately to negate or critically question their meaning.

Although, perhaps what is most important is why the APG felt the need to create their own terms in the first place. In their view, administrative language was not culturally dictating class structure or art production but, in contrast, had culturally failed to achieve anything. According to the APG their contemporary language had failed to describe artist practice, economic policy and more broadly failed to put into words the changing class conditions of the time. In APG's words, "This problem is a matter of pictures- the difference between the pictures we have of who we are and the context of this who and those of a reality viewed from a meta-historical position is a reliable measure of dis-placement, dis-ease...events are structured but not in terms currently used."¹⁷

¹⁷ Artist Placement Group. Date unknown. "Britain Industry and Purpose of the APG". TS, John Latham Archive, Flat Time House, London.

¹⁸ Thompson, E.P. 1978. *The Poverty of Theory: or an Ornery of Errors*. London: Merlin Press.

The poverty of theory

The failure of contemporary language to capture a holistic view of society was a common theme that was referenced across disciplines throughout the 1960s. The desire for a perspective that presented a more inclusive vision of society was rooted in the post WWII's splintering of the British political left. The fragmentation of Britain's left has been eloquently described by historian Perry Anderson as a diaspora of socialist and anarchist thinkers whom were specifically interested in what they termed "full social process." While "full social process" is often used as an umbrella term for a variety of topics, it can be loosely defined as the desire to convey the individual's relationship to greater society in all its social, economic and political totality.

The diversification of leftist views at this time was fueled by a re-visiting of Marx's historical materialism and a critique of Althusserian Marxism (see Anderson 1980; Hamilton 2011, Chapter 7). Central to this critique was prominent British historian and class theorist E.P. Thompson's text "The Poverty of Theory" (1978).¹⁸ Anderson in his text, *Arguments within English Marxism*, succinctly summarizes Thompson's analysis of Marx when he states, "Marx was guilty in Thompson's eyes of the extrapolation of the purely economic categories of capital from the full social process" (Anderson 1980, 98). In other words, that Marxism at this time, most notably Althusser, had abstracted individual and collective "experience" to the point where they could no longer transcend economic and societal categories. While Thompson's perspective was and still is highly criticized, his sentiment was evident in many parallel movements including mass education protests that sought to eliminate what students considered to be detrimental discipline divisions within curriculum. For example, the "sit-in" at the Hornsey College of Art (1968), at which prominent

¹⁹ Stuart Brisley, Hornsey College of Art, “To the Authorities whoever they are”, 1968. Stuart Brisley Archive, London.

²⁰ Artist Placement Group, “Language as a Dividing Medium”, 1983. TS, John Latham Archive, Flat Time House, London.

²¹ Artist Placement Group. 1983. “Language as a Dividing Medium”. TS, John Latham Archive, Flat Time House, London.

individual APG members Stuart Brisley, John Latham and Barbara Steveni came together to demand financial reform and an increased interdisciplinary curriculum.¹⁹ While the APG purposefully refrained from directly aligning themselves with a known political faction, their informal participation in collective action such as the “sit-in” facilitated an epistemological suspicion in the categorization and the fragmentation of societal experience. A critique of their contemporary Marxists, that became the foundation of APG’s crafting of their own political position; to achieve a more “total economy”. However, key to crafting APG’s “total economy” was to respond to one particular problem, the divisive nature of language.²⁰

Within APG’s theoretical notes (they were opposed to creating a group manifesto), this argument is supported by John Latham’s frequent references to quantum physicist David Bohm. A disillusioned communist, Bohm modeled a philosophy that addressed the problem of comprehending a world framework through the inherently divisive nature of language. A position he most famously conveyed in his text *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* (1980). In his chapter, *Wholeness versus Fragmentation*, Bohm states, “Fragmentation is now very widespread, not only throughout society, but also in each individual.” (Bohm 1980, 2), and continues: “Being guided by a fragmentary self-world view, man then acts in such a way as to try to break himself and the world up, so that all seems to correspond to his way of thinking” (ibid. 3).

In Bohm’s philosophy, APG found a contemporary kindred spirit in re-imagining the possibility of perceiving society as an indivisible whole. However, perhaps most influential was Bohm’s belief that the primary catalyst of our fragmented perception of society was language (ibid. 36). And it was specifically the association of language with detrimental divisions in society that brought the divisiveness of language to the forefront of the politics of APG’s practice.

The failure of two systems

Within the *inn70: Art and Economics* exhibition catalogue and Group statements, APG argued that language not only failed in its attempts to describe art, the economy and the relationships between different parts of society, but that it was also inherently a politically divisive medium.²¹ Accusations that were reflected in Leftist media’s critiques of U.K.’s economic policy at the time, such as *The New Left Review*. As the 1960s came to a close, the “stop-go” policy of the imposition of wage controls by the Labour government under Prime Minister Harold Wilson defined the cultural context of APG’s practice as a period of extreme division and skepticism in the political party system. The Labour party itself was considered a conglomeration of contradictions; a party that advocated long-term socialist reform yet implemented short-term wage controls. These contradictions led to a broader public belief that there was a contemporary absence of a radical or alternative socialist policy put

forward by any major political party. As a result, increasing pressure was placed on the role of Trade Unions to fill this political void. However, the increased pressure led to hostility, creating a divisive culture between Unions and Management that played out in the news media (see Rowthorn 1967, 210-227).

The media's coverage of this hostile division was most famously critiqued by the *New Left Review's* 1967 publication, titled, *The Incompatibles*. Essays such as Philip Tonybee's "The Inequality of Language" argues that media outlets, such as *The Times*, through their choices in language not only sowed division but upheld the belief that Unions and Management were incapable of coming together for the "common good" of the economy. Specific phrases used within these publications such as "The Country cannot afford" were, according to Tonybee, a constant "evolving self-justification" (Tonybee 1967, 97); a justification that promoted the maintenance and acceptance of the existing unequal economic system. Tonybee concludes, This language is to be found in its most polished and accomplished form on the leader-pages of all those newspapers which defend the existing social system. The British in particular are a moralizing nation, and it is by scarcely disguised moral arguments that we are constantly urged to accept the present structure of our society (ibid. 95).

However, the essays included in *The Incompatibles* do not limit their critiques to the news media, but further level these same accusations at the use of language in industrial contracts themselves. For example, changes to the language in collective bargaining contracts from the late 1960s onward, would monumentally change the U.K.'s future economic policy. Tony Topham in "New Types of Bargaining" describes this shift in his case study of Fawley Oil Refinery, part of Esso Petroleum, a British division of American Standard Oil. (The same fraction of the corporation that hosted Andre Dipper's Artist Placement that is displayed at *inn70: Art and Economics*.) In his essay Topham argues that Esso used "high-toned language" in an attempt to describe an "enlightened labour policy" that was ideally executed by a paternalistic management. However, Topham observes that the contract in actuality used language to hide the commercial motive of "a drastic intensification of work." (ibid.). Therefore, Esso's language attempted to shift moral responsibility to management but simultaneously gave management more power at often detrimental costs to the labour force.

Re-socialization

The essays in *The Incompatibles* describe the use of divisive, optimistic or paternalistic language to create often destructive divisions and to deceptively change the scope of collective bargaining to prioritize management's control over the labour force. The inequality built into the language of these smaller contracts played out on the national stage through a series of unsuccessful government negotiations

²² Artist Placement Group. Non dated [1970s]. "Aspects of a Single Problem". TS, John Latham Archive, Flat Time House, London.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Artist Placement Group. 1972. "The Arts Council". TS, John Latham Archive, Flat Time House, London.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Barbara Stevini. 1972. *British Civil Service Department Memorandum*. TS. Barbara Stevini Archive, London.

between management and unions: "In Place of Strife" (1969), The Industrial Relations Act (1971), The Trade Unions and Labour Relations Act (1974) and the "Social Contract" (1974-79). As a result, the policy that defined the 1970s, was from the public's perspective, unable to find the language to understand or facilitate cooperation between different political fractions.

This general assumption ultimately tied the absence or failure of politically progressive language to the absence or failure of a radically political body. This sentiment is reflected in the APG's notes from the period when they state, "the current state of the global zeitgeist in 'every aspect' is the polarization into 'free enterprise' and 'socialist ideological' frameworks. Both systems at present fail."²²

The presumed failure of language and subsequently representation ultimately created an opening for APG's practice. The contract, the boardroom and print media for the APG became sites to negate political divisions while at the same time maintaining their artistic autonomy. Within this ambiguity, *inn70: Art and Economics* does not replicate the ideological problems of its political context but rather creates new terminology that ultimately dismantles itself by showing where the "logic of language" ceases to hold.²³ By showing the gaps in language the APG attempted to suggest the idea of dissolving and re-composing one's own perspective and subsequently society's perspective...a re-socialization.

However, as indicated by Fuller's review, *inn70: Art and Economics*' was poorly received and generally misunderstood by the media and art world. The perceived failure of the exhibition led one of the APG's biggest benefactors, the U.K. Arts Council, to cut its funding. The Arts Council claimed that the APG did not show sufficient results and was more interested in "social engineering" than art production.²⁴ The APG interpreted their negative reception as a misunderstanding of their project that was tied to the inherent biases within corporate language, and therefore, the political policy they were trying to challenge. In Stevini's words, "the left and the right had gone to bed together." Coupled with a decline in the economy, the very existence and subsequently the success of the APG, the Group argued, could not be measured by existing perceptions of value.²⁵

In the aftermath of *inn70: Art and Economics*, Stevini negotiated the *British Civil Service Department Memorandum* in Whitehall; a memorandum that opened the door to artist placements within a number of U.K. government organizations including the Department of Environment and the Department of Health and Social Security.²⁶ In the years directly following this negotiation, the APG created the term Incidental Person to replace artist in the majority of their literature and contracts. In a period where political rhetoric had encouraged division rather than representation, the APG would continue through out the 1980s to try and change the language and subsequently the cultural imagination. ●

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